seeds of prickly palmettos. They pile these in a mortar, boil them in water from time to time, and press them as stated above. Others spin cotton, which occupation they resume at night by the fire. They also take care of the sick, and for that they apply themselves to learning the medicinal plants which are good for the illnesses. They have some excellent remedies which are very effective. We will someday know more about them, if it pleases God. Nevertheless, neither the men nor the women wear themselves out with work.

CHAPTER IX

Their Drinking Parties

We will not call them feasts because they only hold their debaucheries to drink and to get drunk, both the men and women. They just call them ouicou, which is the drink that they make from cassava, as strong as they can for these occasions. They hold them nearly every day in various places for various reasons. The most famous drinking party is for war. They hold one when the man and woman have their first male child. They likewise celebrate when they cut off all the hair of their children for the first time. Also when their boys are growing up and attain their adolescence they make them fast, and then hold a celebration. The young men in question capture a Mansfénix or merlin or some other bird of prey and feed it for some time preceding the celebration. Then, everybody being assembled, the father of the young man takes the bird and kills it on the head of his son, and having crushed and ground the body of the bird, puts it into water. Then, after slashing the body of his son with agouti teeth or something else until the blood comes, he bathes and rubs him with this water. Afterwards they make the young man lie very straight in a bed which is hung from the top of the hut, and he must maintain this posture, or else (they imagine) he will become deformed. If he should bend over, he would remain bent, if he should bend a leg, the leg would always remain bent. They also make him fast for too long a time. Next, they dry the heart and feet of the bird and hang them around his neck. For some, who are stronger, they mix a great deal of pimento with the water of which we spoke, and make them eat the bird's heart, and imagine that that will make the boys valiant.

CHAPTER XII

Their Diseases, Death, Mourning, Burial, and Fancies Concerning The Soul

164 Nearly all the Caribs have that disease called the sickness of
757 Naples, or as others say, yaws, which is scarcely any better. The disease is fairly common among the Negroes, and some of the French also suffer from it. It is not, however, at least not always, the responsibility of Venus, since even small children have it. To cure themselves, they do not try sweating at all, but grate shellfish, which they swallow with water. They rub themselves with genipa, or with reed leaves burned with liana, which they call mouchao or miby. They do not get well as soon as patients who are made to sweat.

165 One sees very few other diseases among them, and it is a marvel that living such a mean life they are so healthy and fat and live so long. For it is certain that they usually live very long. It was only four or five months ago that the father of The Baron died, and his wife, The Baron's mother, still lives. The Baron, whose wife is still living, has a daughter; this daughter has a daughter and this latter already has children. So The Baron is a great-grandfather and his mother is a great-great grandmother [727] and The Baron's daughter, who is a grandmother herself, still has her own grandmother. And this is not the only example to be cited. Their long life must be attributed to their lack of cares.

751 They blame their demon for their diseases and if the illness is long and severe they call the boïayko to consult him about it. They
● 758 have a number of remedies which the women apply to the sick, but they treat the sick no more delicately than they do the healthy.

Relatives rarely or never visit their sick kin. Generally married
[734] people do not visit the sick, because, they say, their bodies emit a force which afflicts the sick even more. That is why when one of The Baron's sons was ill, neither his brother, his sisters, nor his father went to see him; only his mother treated him and she did not communicate at all with his father.

727 When some among them are killed in war, they do what they can to recover the bodies and bury them. Following is how they bury their dead.

758 As soon as they have fallen sick their spouses and near relatives leave them and visit them no more. They say their reason is that in their own bodies there is an essence which is not only capable of harming and worsening the sick man's condition, but could also cause his death. Many do not visit the sick for this reason, although they do not lack sympathy toward some one *of* their friends or relatives who is sick. Their sympathies are not by nature perverted.

Once Father Raymond [Breton] asked a young Carib boy why he did not visit his sick father who was on the verge of death. The poor boy signed and shed a stream of tears which showed the extent to which his heart was moved by compassion for the plight of his father, and also showed that it was impossible for him to think about it without being affected. Yet he could not visit his father, who was in such a miserable condition, because then he [the father] would die immediately. In this respect we are made aware that they are not such barbarians as one imagines.

761 Father Raymond [Breton] says that he has seen some of the most vicious among them dying with dreadful anxiety as a result of apprehension and doubt over what should become of their souls after their death. No one among them could provide solace to these persons.

764 As soon as a person dies the women wash the body, clean it, and paint it with urucu from head to toe. The hair is greased with palmetto oil and is combed and tied. The deceased is arranged as neatly as he might appear in a solemn assembly. Then the women wrap him in a cotton hammock which has never been used. The grave is dug for burial in the very house in which he died, or else a house is especially built for him. They never bury their dead in an unprotected place, and they never omit these ceremonial practices —no matter where the place of death occurs.

Once a Carib captain of Dominica with his family of thirty to thirty-five people was bringing us one of his sick children to have him baptized before his death. However, the child died two leagues from our convent, and the group arrived greatly saddened, showing much regret over the fact that he had died before receiving baptism. With great insistence they asked us to give them a small abandoned house which we owned, located in a garden on the seashore. It was to be used as a sepulcher for their child. We willingly gave it to

8: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1950
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they still eat no fish or fowl—unless it be crabs, and these must be female—so long as their children remain feeble and weakly. . . . Otherwise, he said, the children would have stomach-ache, or else bodily deformations resembling the animals that their fathers had eaten.[5]

Further details are given by du Tertre and by La Borde.[6] For a first-born male child, the father's retreat lasted three months; for other births, only five or six days; and during this period, he lived in a separate building and avoided those who were leading a normal life. But for six months after the birth of any child of his, he had to abstain from eating the flesh of certain animals. The mother also fasted for some—du Tertre says forty—days, drinking only warmed water, and eating dry cassava. On no account, says La Borde, must she eat female crabs. The child was bathed immediately after birth; and, so that it should not catch cold if this took place at night, all the men in the carbet got up and went out to bathe also.

When a death occurred:

The children of the deceased or his wife cut their hair in sign of mourning. They *also fast for one or two months.* Father Raymond (Breton) asked them whether this fast helped the dead in any way, and they said: no; but that those who did not fast *would grow old sooner, be unsure of foot* and unable to see fish in the water, and that they would be liable to surprise by their enemies.[8]

Similarly:

When girls begin to have their flowers, they make them *fast for one or two months;* as also the boys, when these attain their adolescence; and they have them scarified with aguti-teeth.[9]

According to La Borde, if a Carib were wounded when away from home, he would send immediately to tell the members of his family, so that these might not, by continuing their normal diet and activities, become the involuntary cause of aggravating his affliction. It may be gathered, moreover, that they were not always disposed to co-operate fully in this matter; for we are told that:

The kin never, or but very rarely, visit their sick; and married (*du Tertre says:* newly married) people generally do not go at all, because, they say, *there emanates from their body a principle which afflicts the sick person the more.* For this reason, when one of the Baron's sons was sick, neither his brothers nor his sisters nor his father went to see him; *only his mother looked after him, and she kept away from the father.*[7]

We are also told that fasting was a prerequisite for the would-be *buiei* or shaman, and for candidates for chieftaincy.

[5] *In* Rennard, 1929, pp. 59–60.
[6] du Tertre, 1667–71, vol. II, p. 412; La Borde, *in* Hennepin, 1704, pp. 587–593.
[8] Armand de la Paix, *in* Rennard, 1929, pp. 72–73.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 61. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 72.